

**Florida MPO Advisory Council  
Meeting of the Staff Directors  
September 16, 2020  
Orlando, Florida  
Meeting Minutes**

**Staff Directors in Attendance:**

**IN-PERSON (STAFF DIRECTORS – A TOTAL OF 13 WITH 9 MAKING AN IN-PERSON QUORUM)**

Lois Bollenback, Chair, River to Sea TPO  
Donald Scott, Vice Chair, Lee County MPO  
Greg Stuart, Broward MPO  
Gary Harrell, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO  
Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas  
Mike Escalante, Gainesville MTPO  
Beth Alden, Hillsborough MPO  
Gary Huttman, MetroPlan Orlando  
Jeff Sheffield, North Florida TPO  
Rob Balmes, Ocala/Marion County MPO  
Georganna Gillette, Space Coast TPO  
Chandra Fredrick, Polk TPO  
Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO

**IN-PERSON (OTHERS)**

Carl Mikyska, MPOAC  
Jeff Kramer, CUTR  
Alison Stettner, Florida DOT OPP  
Paul Calvaresi, Broward MPO

**VIRTUAL (STAFF DIRECTORS – A TOTAL OF 8 THAT CANNOT CONTRIBUTE TO A QUORUM)**

Scott Koons, Gainesville MTPO  
Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO  
Mike Woods, Lake-Sumter MPO  
Marybeth Soderstrom, Heartland Regional TPO  
Whit Blanton, Forward Pinellas  
Lisa Colmenares, Miami-Dade TPO  
Steve Diez, Hernando/Citrus MPO  
Nick Uhren, Palm Beach TPA

**VIRTUAL (OTHERS)**

Leigh Holt, Sarasota/Manatee MPO

Laura Carter, Space Coast TPO  
Virginia Whittington, MetroPlan Orlando  
Mark Reichert, Florida DOT  
Scott Phillips, Florida DOT  
Johnathan Waldron, MPOAC  
Christen Miller, CUTR  
Chris Vela, Hillsborough County Citizen

## • CALL TO ORDER

Lois Bollenback, Chair, River to Sea TPO, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. All in attendance introduced themselves. Those attending online were then given an opportunity to introduce themselves.

A moment of silence was held to remember those lost and infected during the pandemic.

## • APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 30, 2020 MEETING

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2020 meeting of the MPOAC Staff Directors' Advisory Committee was made by Gary Huttman, MetroPlan Orlando, and seconded by Gary Harrell, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

## • PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Vela, a citizen of Hillsborough County, Florida, spoke during public comments. His comments related to the need to spend available funds for Interstate projects where they were needed in the state and in opposition to spending such funds on managed lanes projects on the Interstate system in the urban core of Tampa. He expressed support for transit and encouraged MPOs in Florida to advocate for federal funding to be allocated directly to MPOs (and directed away from the Strategic Intermodal Systems (SIS)) so the funding can be focused on locally significant road and transit projects.

## • AGENCY REPORTS

### A. FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Alison Stettner, Director of the Office of Policy Planning and Mark Reichert, Administrator for Metropolitan Planning, updated the members on the activities of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

- The Department is working on a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) template that can be used by all 27 Florida MPOs during the next UPWP update. The UPWP template will be a topic of conversation at the next Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP) meeting, typically held in December. FDOT will be sending a survey to MPOs before the meeting to gather input and ideas on the UPWP template.
- Ms. Stettner asked MPOs to complete the survey that Florida DOT sent relating to the Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) proposal. FDOT is rebooting that effort, looking at the experiences of other states and the costs and potential pitfalls associated with implementing a CPG approach in Florida.
  - Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO, asked about the focus of the current work as the MPOAC had already expressed support for the concept. Ms. Stettner replied that they were most interested in documenting in detail the potential benefits and costs of a CPG program, focusing on potential time and costs savings.
  - Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, complimented FDOT on their effort to move forward with a CPG.

## B. FLORIDA DIVISION OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FHWA representatives were unable to attend the meeting and no comments were provided.

## • BUSINESS ITEMS & PRESENTATIONS

### A. APPROVAL OF MPOAC'S FINAL UPWP FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021 & 2022

Carl Mikyska, MPOAC Executive Director, presented the contents of the draft final MPOAC Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to the membership. The UPWP is the funding application to the federal government for the use of federal transportation planning funds (PL and FTA 5303). He mentioned that a draft UPWP had been presented to the MPOAC Governing Board and the MPOAC Staff Directors' Advisory Committee at their January 30, 2020 meeting. He also stated that the draft UPWP had been available for several weeks on the MPOAC website for public review and comment. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Florida Division Office had both provided comments. Mr. Mikyska noted that the draft final UPWP under discussion today reflects all comments provided to the MPOAC.

Mr. Mikyska described how the document had not been adopted by the MPOAC Governing Board following the comment period due to the inability of the MPOAC to meet since the January 2020 meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the MPOAC is currently receiving funding by having been included in the (FDOT) State Planning and Research (SPR)

document. Mr. Mikyska noted, as part of the SPR document, that the MPOAC was currently unable to make changes to the budget or the activities of the organization.

Mr. Mikyska concluded his remarks by suggesting that the MPOAC Staff Directors' Advisory Committee recommend adoption of the UPWP by the MPOAC Governing Board at the next available opportunity.

Discussion followed, including:

- Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO, asked how much was programmed for consultant services and if the amount had changed since the previous UPWP. Mr. Mikyska described where in the UPWP funding for consulting services was included and that the amount had not changed since the previous UPWP. Mr. Buchwald also asked about dues for the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and the Association of MPOs (AMPO) and whether the membership felt it was necessary to belong to both organizations. Mr. Mikyska described where in the UPWP funding for both associations could be found and the benefits of membership to both organizations for the MPOAC and the states 27 MPOs. The consensus of the body was that membership in both organizations was beneficial.
- Gary Huttman, MetroPlan Orlando, asked how roll-forward funds from the previous UPWP worked. Mr. Mikyska described how those funds are made available for use by the Florida MPOs in the next fiscal year. Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO, followed up by asking about the CHECKPL spreadsheet that FDOT had used in the past to track federal planning fund (PL) expenditures across the state. Ms. Stettner, FDOT, described how FDOT had created a new spreadsheet to replace the old CHECKPL that was more efficient and effective at tracking PL expenditures. Mr. Huttman then asked whether the new UPWP took into account a strategy once under consideration to accelerate payments of national dues to NARC and AMPO to better align with the calendar year. Mr. Mikyska indicated that the draft final UPWP did not take that strategy into account due to the precarious and disjointed nature of funding during the pandemic. He indicated that a UPWP amendment could be processed at a future meeting of the MPOAC to implement the strategy should the membership desire.
- Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, sought clarification for why there was a separate UPWP Task to engage in activities related to the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program. Mr. Mikyska indicated that the significant nature of this activity warranted a new task to highlight the significance of the MPOAC being engaged in such a high-profile policy discussion. Ms. Stettner indicated that the task was an appropriate mechanism to provide the level of detail FHWA was expecting in the document and to ensure transparency in agency activities.

- Mike Escalante, Gainesville MTPO, asked a question about the MPOAC Institute, leading to a description of plans to provide an online orientation for MPO Board members.

A motion to recommend approval of the draft final UPWP by the MPOAC Governing Board was made by Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, and a second was made by Mike Escalante, Gainesville MTPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

## B. APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO MPOAC BYLAWS

Carl Mikyska, MPOAC Executive Director, led a discussion of proposed MPOAC bylaw amendments and provided background for the suggested amendments. Currently, the MPOAC bylaws do not allow for the Chair of the Governing Board to make decisions or approvals for the continued operation of the MPOAC during an emergency event (such as the current pandemic) or other occasions where the MPOAC Governing Board is unable to meet. The suggested amendments to the MPOAC Bylaws will allow the Chair of the MPOAC Governing Board to act on behalf of the MPOAC when the organization is unable to meet. Additional suggested amendments were also proposed to both cleanup and clarify existing clauses, including typos, in the bylaws.

A discussion ensued about the suggested amendments to the MPOAC bylaws as follows:

- Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO, asked for clarification on the inclusion of federal citations. Mr. Mikyska indicated that Paul Gougelman, MPOAC General Counsel, felt that including the citations in the document provided grounding for the bylaws in federal law. Mr. Buchwald also asked about the powers being delegated to the Executive Committee as part of the proposed amendments. Mr. Mikyska explained what the intentions of the new authority included during times of disruption.
- Jeff Sheffield, North Florida TPO, asked that the amendment include a clause that all decisions made during the period of disruption be brought before the MPOAC Governing Board for reconciliation at the first meeting following the disruption. The membership in attendance indicated agreement for that addition.
- Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, asked about the amendment related to officer elections and indicated that he did not see a need for that change. He also stated that, in his opinion, it would be appropriate for officers to stay in place if a vote of the membership were delayed during a disruptive period. Discussion ensued and the membership indicated support for these positions.
- Mike Escalante, Gainesville MTPO, stated that he preferred the term “disruption of normal operations” instead of “emergency” to broaden the application of the proposed amendments.

- Lois Bollenback, River to Sea TPO, sought to confirm the adjustments the membership wanted to make to the proposed MPOAC bylaws amendments. These included making no changes to the bylaws related to MPOAC officers other than confirming that officers would stay in place until such time as an election can be held and that the MPOAC Governing Board would retroactively approve or adjust all decisions made during a disruptive period.

A motion to approve the proposed changes to the suggested amendments, as described above, was made by Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, and seconded by Jeff Sheffield, North Florida TPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

An additional motion was made by Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO, to direct that the typographical errors identified by Carl Mikyska be corrected. A second was made by Greg Stuart, Broward MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

A final motion to recommend approval by the MPOAC Governing Board of the modified suggested amendments to the MPOAC bylaws was made by Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO. A second was made Beth Alden, Hillsborough MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

## C. LEGISLATIVE POLICY POSITIONS

Carl Mikyska, MPOAC Executive Director, led a discussion on the proposed MPOAC Legislative Priorities and Policy Positions for the 2021 Florida legislative session. The 2021 legislative session will begin with committee meetings in January. The full legislative session will begin in March. Mr. Mikyska noted that the MPOAC develops a set of policy positions each year to guide MPAOC staff as they engage in the legislative process on behalf of the interests of MPOs across the state.

Mr. Mikyska pulled up the proposed 2021 Legislative Policy Positions in a Word document to simultaneously discuss and amend them one proposed policy at a time. Ms. Bollenback, River to Sea TPO, confirmed that while the membership would consider and edit each policy position at a time, the whole package could be considered at the end of the discussion under a single motion.

Policy Position 1 and 2 (relating to transportation revenue and funding): These positions were considered together as the MPOAC staff recommendation was to create an additional bullet point as part of Position 1 that reflects the spirit of Position 2 and to delete Position 2 as a stand-alone position. Mr. Mikyska provided background on the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP), the traditional second MPOAC policy position, as part of the discussion. Further discussion touched on a variety of subjects including considering

allocating TRIP funds along with Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Urban Allocation (SU) funds, elevating the TRIP in the flow chart of documentary stamp funding obligations, and the appropriate level of funding for the TRIP.

A motion to approve the staff recommendation to create a bullet as part of Position 1 that reflects Position 2 and to delete Position 2 as a stand-alone position was made by Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, and seconded by Don Scott, Lee County MPO. The motion was approved with Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO, voting in opposition.

Policy Position 3 (relating to funding for the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS)): The MPOAC staff recommended no changes to the existing position. Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas, expressed concern that the existing language relating to Transportation Performance Measurement (TPM) could create confusion and limit the ability of funds allocated to the SIS to be spent on transit projects. She proposed that the words “... and are part of the TPM system” be removed from the end of last sentence of the explanatory text.

A motion to approve the staff recommendation, but removing the words “... and are part of the TPM system” was made by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas, and seconded by Beth Alden, Hillsborough MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

Policy Position 4 (relating to transit project funding): The MPOAC staff recommended no changes to the existing position. Beth Alden, Hillsborough MPO, stated that transit agencies in the Tampa Bay area were seeking to have the match requirements waived during the current pandemic to help them preserve their stressed budgets. By consent, MPOAC staff was asked to add language to the position asking for match requirements on transit funds be waived during the current pandemic. Mike Escalante, Gainesville MTPO, suggested alternate language that would emphasize “expanding” uses for funds coming from the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) in place of an emphasis on “removing limitations.” Mr. Escalante also suggested using the phrase “remove various funding limitations to enable flexibility of State Transportation Trust Funds for funding Transit Projects, Capital and Operating. Identity through the Metropolitan transportation planning process.” By consent, MPOAC staff were directed to include language emphasizing “expanding” the potential use of STTF funds that is consistent with policies on this issue from the Florida Public Transportation Association.

Policy Position 5 and 6 (relating to state rules attaching to federal planning funding and innovative transportation mobility solutions): The MPOAC staff recommended no changes to the existing positions. There was no discussion on these policy positions.

Policy Position 7 (relating to hands-free driving): The MPOAC staff recommended no changes to the existing position, but that the position be elevated to the second position in

the list. By consent, MPOAC staff were directed to elevate the position to the second position in the list.

Policy Position 8 (related to virtual meetings): The MPOAC staff recommended that a new policy position be added to the 2021 Legislative Priorities and Policy Positions. The new policy position would allow all governmental units in the state to meet virtually while an emergency declaration was in place and for 90 days following the lifting of the emergency declaration. Discussion touched on support by affiliated associations, the potential for allowing virtual meetings even during “normal” times and ensuring that the policy position would include regional and statewide organizations such as the MPOAC and regional coalitions of MPOs. Beth Alden, Hillsborough MPO, suggested that the new position be added as the third position in the list. By consent, the membership approved the addition of the new policy position as the third position in the list.

A revised draft of the 2020 Legislative Priorities and Policy Positions will be presented to the membership at the next meeting of the MPOAC Staff Directors’ Advisory Committee (currently scheduled for October 29, 2020).

#### D. MPOAC MEETING DATE METHODOLOGY

Carl Mikyska, MPOAC Executive Director, led a discussion to define a methodology for setting future MPOAC meetings. Mr. Mikyska opened the discussion by describing the difficulties establishing meeting dates in the past, but that a solution that appeared popular was to hold MPOAC meetings on the fifth weekday of the normal meeting months of January, April, July and October. He proposed the following three step methodology for setting future MPOAC meeting calendars:

In order of priority –

1. Hold the meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> Tues, Wed or Thurs of Jan, April, July and Oct
2. Hold the meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> Mon or Fri of Jan, April, July and Oct
3. Hold the meeting on other months that have available 5<sup>th</sup> Tues, Wed or Thurs, spacing meetings apart by 3 months

As an alternative, Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, discussed holding meetings on the 5<sup>th</sup> Tues, Wed or Thurs of Jan, April, July and Oct, if possible. Otherwise, meetings will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of Jan, April, July and Oct. Discussion touched on support for this simpler methodology, though Lisa Colmenares, Miami-Dade TPO, expressed concern as the Miami-Dade TPO typically meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month.



A motion to recommend approval by the MPOAC Governing Board for holding meetings on the 5th Tues, Wed or Thurs of Jan, April, July and Oct, if possible or otherwise on the 4th Thursday of Jan, April, July and Oct was made by Greg Stuart, Broward MPO. A second was made Peter Buchwald, St. Lucie TPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### • MEMBER COMMENTS

- Mike Escalante, Gainesville MTPO, was happy to report that the MTPO had adopted their 2045 LRTP a few weeks ago.
- Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, asked the membership for support for his nomination to the AMPO Board of Directors.
- Gary Huttman, MetroPlan Orlando, asked the membership if there was any appetite for the group to engage with the Department in a full review and revision of the FDOT MPO Program Management Handbook. He noted that while it had been revised several times by FDOT, the last full revision had not been conducted since 2017. Mark Reichert, FDOT, noted that the document is now a “living” document that is revised quarterly. MPOs are notified of any changes and are always welcome to provide comments and suggestions.

#### • ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting of the MPOAC Staff Directors’ Advisory Committee will be held at Noon on October 29, 2020 at the Orlando Airport Marriott Lakeside Hotel, 7499 Augusta National Drive, Orlando, FL 32822.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:44 p.m.